

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STOCKH 00329 270028Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00
EB-08 FMC-02 INR-07 NSAE-00 CG-00 DLOS-09 OES-07
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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2849
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY OSLO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: NORWAY VOICES CONTINUED DISPLEASURE OVER SWEDISH GOVERN-
MENTS'S SUPPORT OF SHIPBUILDING AND SHIPPING

REF: (A) 77 STOCKHOLM A-67, (B) STOCKHOLM 0299

1. THE STOCKHOLM PRESS REPORTED ON JANUARY 25 THAT THE SWEDISH AND NORWEGIAN COMMERCE MINISTERS, WHEN THEY MET IN OSLO ON JANUARY 24 TO DISCUSS COMMON TRADE PROBLEMS, WERE NOT ABLE TO SETTLE THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES OVER THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT OF SWEDISH SHIPBUILDING AND SHIPPING. THESE SUPPORT MEASURES WERE PROPOSED IN SWEDISH GOVERNMENT BILL 139, SUBMITTED FOR RIKSDAG APPROVAL ON APRIL 18, 1977 AND PASSED ON JUNE 3 (FOR CONTENTS OF BILL, SEE REFERENCED EMBASSY AIRGRAM).

2. IT WAS IN THE AUTUMN OF 1977 THAT THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT, FOR THE FIRST TIME, PROTESTED AGAINST THE SWEDISH SUPPORT MEASURES. THEY ALLEGEDLY GAVE THE SWEDISH SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OVER NORWEGIAN SHIPBUILDERS
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 STOCKH 00329 270028Z

AND DISTORTED SOUND TRADE PRACTICES. THEY ALSO INDUCED NORWEGIAN SHIPPING COMPANIES TO PLACE THEIR ORDERS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION WITH SWEDISH SHIPYARDS BECAUSE OF THE ATTRACTIVE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT LOAN GUARANTEES OFFERED THEM. THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT, THROUGH ITS COMMERCE MINISTER, HAS INDICATED THAT IT DOES NOT WISH THE SWEDISH SUPPORT MEASURES TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO

NORWEGIAN SHIPPING COMPANIES. MOREOVER, IN THE
OPINION OF THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT, SUCH SUPPORT
MEASURES CONFLICT WITH THE RULES OF OECD.

3. DURING THE OSLO MEETING WITH HIS NORWEGIAN COUNTER-
PART, SWEDISH COMMERCE MINISTER BURENSTAM LINDER STATED
THAT THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WISH TO "DISRUPT
SOUND COMPETITIVE CONDITIONS." HE ADDED THAT IT IS
NOT THE INTENTION OF THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT, THROUGH
VARIOUS SUPPORT MEASURES, TO "EXPORT SWEDISH UNEMPLOY-
MENT TO ANOTHER COUNTRY." HE ASSURED NORWEGIAN
COMMERCE MINISTER HALVARD BAKKE THAT THE SWEDISH GOVERN-
MENT WILL NOT GRANT EXPORT CREDITS IF SUCH A MEASURE
WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF ATTRACTING ORDERS FOR NEW CON-
STRUCTION TO THE SWEDISH SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY AT THE
EXPENSE OF NORWEGIAN SHIPBUILDERS. THE CURRENT DISPUTE
BETWEEN NORWAY AND SWEDEN OVER THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT'S
SUPPORT MEASURES IS SHORTLY TO BECOME THE SUBJECT OF
FURTHER TALKS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. A REPORT ON
THE OUTCOME OF THOSE TALKS WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE
DEPARTMENT WHEN THEY HAVE TAKEN PLACE.

KENNEDY-MINOTT

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